

**DRAFT**  
**ERUUF Annual Meeting**  
Minutes  
May 18, 2025

**Call to Order**

The Annual Meeting was brought to order at 11:38 AM by Board Chair, Ann Verdine-Jones.

**Opening Words and Chalice Lighting**

The meeting began with opening words and the lighting of the chalice led by Trustees, Trisha Lester and Mel Downey-Piper. The opening words were *Don't Quit* by John Greenleaf Whittier.

**Establishment of a Quorum**

The Board Secretary, Mel Downey-Piper, established a quorum with 17 online participants and 117 attending in person at the start of the meeting.

**Rules of Procedure**

Ann Verdine-Jones gave an overview of the meeting procedures which were available as part of the Annual Meeting Packet. Dave Mills is serving as the parliamentarian for the meeting.

**Vote to Approve 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Following acceptance of a motion to approve the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting, a second, and no discussion, a vote was taken.

- The motion was approved in person and online.
- Absentee ballot count to approve added 14 votes.

**State of ERUUF**

Rev. Brett shared highlights of the 2024-2025 year which covered the second year of our 3- year Strategic Plan. Last year, the Board crafted an Annual Vision of Ministry that speaks to the heart of who we are and who we aspire to be as a community:

- Create joy that fuels connection
- Honor the legacy of our elders and the unfolding of our living tradition
- Foster impactful and sustainable growth

Some examples of this Vision of Ministry include hosting a joyful election party and having 81 new members join ERUUF this year. We also celebrated Rev. Cayer as Minister Emerita. We have now moved into a new category of what is considered a large congregation.

Regarding Strategic Plan goal number 1, expanding and deepening our commitment to diversity and implementation of ERUUF's Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI) Theory of Change:

- The Board of Trustees received a grant from the Eno River Fellowship Foundation to update our bylaws through a racial equity lens, and this project is under way.
- We had our first artist in residence this year, Demeanor, which was also funded through a grant from the Foundation. There were a series of 6 workshops, a worship service, and an upcoming concert. In FY26, our Fall artist in residence will be Shana Tucker, a cellist; in the Spring, it will be the Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green.

Regarding goal number 2, centering our youth and families:

- Kinsey Moritz will move into a full-time role as RE Director.
- We have had children and youth become chalice lighters this year.

Regarding goal number 3, engage deeply in social justice and earth justice:

- The Migration and Refugee Action Group went to Honduras this year to learn more about the impacts of migration in Central America.
- The EV stations are free to use at ERUUF.

Regarding goal number 4, to create and implement a sustainable plan for finance, facilities, and communications:

- We launched our long-term financial advisory plan.
- We developed and completed a special fundraising campaign that replenished our reserve funds.
- The Pledge Drive was the most successful in ERUUF's history.

Regarding goal number 5, expanding and deepening our relationships between ERUUF and the larger UU denomination.

- UUA President Sofia Betancourt requested to come to ERUUF to experience our Kwanza service.
- Meadville President Elias Ortega preached at ERUUF.
- Board Chair Ann Verdine-Jones and Rev. Trollinger co-taught a class at Meadville about administration and finances for churches.
- Rev. Brett is on the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and has been asked to be co-chair of this national nonprofit.

Rev. Brett will be on summer break from July 1 - August 31 and on sabbatical from September through November of this year.

### **Pulse Survey**

Mark Henault, Chair of the Committee on the Evaluation of Ministry, shared highlights of this year's Pulse Survey, which occurred from February 3-March 3, 2025. There were 280 members and friends who participated in the Pulse Survey this year. The goal was to provide feedback in strategic areas. Question results were categorized as a strength or opportunity.

Of note:

- 90% of respondents agree that ERUUF is doing well.
- The committee identified strengths and opportunities regarding several categories.
- Regarding strategic plan:
  - Strengths included expanded and deepened commitment to diversity; created a sustainable plan for finance, facilities and communications; and included family, children and youth into the life of the congregation
  - Opportunities for additional commitment and activity included Earth Justice and strengthened, deepened, and expanded our relationships between ERUUF and the larger UU denomination
- Regarding programs and activities,
  - Strengths included Sunday Morning Worship, music, children and youth RE, Fellowship Hour, Pastoral Care
  - Opportunities included Adult RE
- Results of the survey will be available online.

#### **Looking Forward: Budget Presentation**

Ann Verdine-Jones introduced the presentation with an overview of the budget development process by the Coordinating Team with input from the Board of Trustees, the Board's Financial Advisory Committee (BFAC) , and input from the Budget Forum. It reflects a balance of our vision for ERUUF and the resources available.

Revs. Brett and Trollinger shared an overview of the 2025-2026 Budget. Of note:

- The budget has to account for a number of things including:
  - Support emerging needs of a growing congregation.
  - Continue to center our children, youth, and families as we nurture our values and our UU faith.
  - Address fair compensation equity issues for staff.
  - Right size the budget relative to the number of people served (1,270 members, friends, children—and counting!)
  - Build towards a \$1.2+ million budget to match congregation size (comparable with other large UU congregations)
- Maintain fiscal health of the congregation through long-term financial planning strategies while also keeping up with inflation. We are able to project 395 pledging households for a total of \$960,000 (compared to 844,000 last year).
- 94 or 24% of all pledges reflect an increase, plus there are 45 new pledges this year. The average gift was \$2,430.
- Budget highlights included:
  - Address changes in the UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines as we seek to support and grow our staff in an equitable manner.
    - 5% COLA increase for staff (per UUA recommendation)

- Adjust 4 positions towards new UUA guidelines (big step forward in multi-year plan to address equity and fair compensation)
    - Increase staff hours for Religious Exploration, Membership, Justice, Office, and Facilities
  - Program budgets:
    - Lead Minister sabbatical and 60th Anniversary
    - Modest increases (Justice, Membership, Worship)
  - Meet cost of doing business/inflation increases:
    - Health insurance & Property insurance
    - General office and facilities (janitorial, compostables, IT, licenses, etc.)
    - Utilities (busy campus = greater usage)
- Strategic Initiatives Fund (\$150,000 planned transfer for 2025-26 budget)
  - We are seeking to balance, in a sustainable way, the growing budget needs with present and expected resources from all income streams, including the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The budget has relied on reserve funds in the past few years to support a growth budget. There will be sufficient reserve funds to provide near-term support for the operating budget and campus maintenance due to the successful Special Campaign completed in early 2025 (Special Campaign \$846,650 total from 112 pledge units).
  - This year, we planned \$129,000 for a budget transfer; the actual needed transfer is \$105,000. The Special Campaign will add \$550,000 to the Strategic Initiatives Fund, which generally lasts five years.

A motion to approve the \$1,252,723 budget was accepted and seconded. The floor was opened for discussion.

#### Questions

1. It sounds like there are amounts for planned reserves and transfers, but why is the actual transfer lower?

Response: There are two main funds. The Campus Needs Fund can only be used for campus maintenance, and we are following that schedule as things are needed. This averages \$75,000 - \$80,000 per year. We did the Special Campaign in order to pay for these costs which is an alternative way of doing this instead of adding funds to the operating budget each year.

2. Comment - Thank you for making the budget explanation so simple. I am also thrilled for the 5% increase for staff.

#### Vote to Approve FY 2025-2026 Budget

- The motion to approve the recommended budget of \$1,252,723 was approved in person and online.
- Absentee ballot count to approve added 14 votes.

### **Nominating Committee Report and Elections**

Page Potter, member of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of candidates for the open governance positions:

#### **Board of Trustees**

Elizabeth Ault  
Addison Evans  
Sarah Ward

#### **Nominating Committee**

Sloan Alday  
Susan Baylies  
Cheryl Turney

#### **Healthy Congregations Committee**

Prue Cuper

Following acceptance of a motion to approve the slate of candidates, a second, and no discussion.

- The motion to approve the slate was approved in person and online.
- Absentee ballot count to approve added 14 votes.

### **Introduction of Youth Trustee**

Steve Hall, Trustee, introduced Eli Rawls, Youth Board Trustee.

### **Acknowledgement of Outgoing Elected Leaders**

Ann Verdine-Jones, Board Chair, acknowledged outgoing elected leaders of the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, and Healthy Congregations Committee.

### **Closing words and Adjournment**

A highlight video reel of ERUUF 2024-2025 was shown. Steve Hall and Eli Rawls ended the meeting with closing words: "Be About the Work" by Andrea Hawkins-Kamper.

### **Summary of congregational votes taken:**

- The Minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting were approved.
- The recommended budget of \$1,252,723 was approved.
- The slate of candidates for the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, and Healthy Congregations Committee was approved.

Submitted by Mel Downey-Piper, Secretary, Board of Trustees.